

HB 6709

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony. I will be clear in my request as a Connecticut life long resident, college student, mother, caregiver and daughter to two terminally ill patients. I am asking for hope. I want the HOPE for a cure, relief of debilitating symptoms or an extension in my loved ones lives.

Last year while attending my spring semester at University of Connecticut, in my own world trying to plan a prosperous and successful future for my family. I was hit with two terminal diagnosis of loved ones. One being an amazingly healthy and vibrant stepmother Deb Miller with ALS and my independent father with Alzheimer's disease Roger Butler Jr. These diseases are life altering from the minute of diagnosis for not only the patient but the families. Learning your loved ones are terminally ill sucked the air out of my lungs. The world became a darker place.

The one thing that differs these particular diagnosis from even certain early cancers is they have a cheering section and a ray of hope that you can beat this. All the others are HOPING one day we will have a cure. I'm sure you have all bought a bracelet or done an ice bucket challenge in support. But so much more can be done.

Due to laws prohibiting access to new drugs or experimental trials literally amputates the arm of hope reaching out to the community of these people who have horrific diagnosis. The one thing you want to do is comfort your loved one and give them hope. Without trying there can be no victories.

Please pass this bill if for no other reason then giving patients the ability to regain their autonomy and some sort of control to their future. My belief is that as humans we should have the right to have to save ourselves by any means necessary, especially when a cure or treatment is just awaiting approval. Would you want the "RIGHT TO TRY" for your love, parents, children or possibly yourself?

This bill is for the people who are terminal but also those who support them daily in day to day activities who work, go to school, raise families and pray for a miracle drug for their loved one. You have the power to be the first step in being a part of making that miracle happen. Please be the ray of hope.

I support HB 6709, a Right to Try Experimental Drugs for Terminally Ill Patients.

Please if nothing else let my loved ones live with HOPE and die trying not waiting.

Thank you for your time,

Melanie Felton